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As per its commitment made in July last year, the United States delivered the final shipment in food assistance worth US\$ 5 million for the UN World Food Programme's (WFP) operations in Nepal, said the US Embassy in Kathmandu in press statement on Thursday.

The food, which was provided through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), would be used to support the livelihoods of both conflict and drought-affected people across eight districts of Nepal, the statement said, adding that the food had arrived in batches over the last six months, with the last consignment arriving in February.

Relating the food assistance to the United States' long-standing commitment to the welfare of the rural food-deprived Nepali people, the USAID Director Dr Kevin A. Rushing said, 'The 5 million dollars in assistance provided more than 3,500 tons of basic food staples, including rice and peas to Nepal's vulnerable poor, through the World Food Programme.'

With the latest commitment, the USAID contribution has remained worth US \$12.7 million over the past year to WFP in Nepal and plans to extend the assistance to the Bhutanese refugees concentrated in the Eastern Nepal, the statement said.

Expressing his thankfulness to the timely contribution and continued support from the USAID, Richard Ragan, the WFP Country Representative, said, "This support has been extremely critical in meeting the needs of more than 450,000 people,' adding 'however Nepal still requires additional assistance especially because of the growing number of hungry people in the country."

The 2008/2009 winter drought, among the worst in the country's history, destroyed crops across Nepal and placed 2 million people at a high risk of food insecurity.